

as a State enactment legalising the malpractices of ignorant quacks. The fact of the matter is, that the few faddists who are attempting to force upon midwives, medical men, and the public, legislation which no one wants—and which would cause great harm if passed—know little or nothing of the subject from a practical point of view, and are equally unable to realise the absurdity of their position or the futility of their efforts. However, it seems probable that, in due time, both these points will become clear to them, and it is to be hoped that out of their unworkable project a more sensible and useful scheme may arise.

There are two other points to which we would allude. We have been asked by several of our medical readers for information respecting the Midwives' Institute, to which we recently referred, and can only reply that we know as little of this small society as every one else does. We have made numerous efforts to obtain a report and the audited statement of accounts or a list of the members, but without success; and it appears that even would-be members have failed to gain this very necessary information. The natural conclusion is, that a limited company of this sort which does not publish its accounts or list of members must be ashamed of its financial and numerical weakness, and may, therefore, be permitted to remain in the secret seclusion which it appears to desire.

The other point is, that the opposition of the medical profession to any proposal of legislation for Midwives has become so strong that it only requires a little organization to make it impossible for any Bill framed for such a purpose to pass into law; and if the reports which we hear are even partially correct, a very powerful organization will shortly be ready for this purpose. The opposition to legislation, in fact, is as powerful as the support to it is weak and discredited; and for this and other reasons, we are compelled to believe that no Midwives' Registration Bill will be passed this century; furthermore, that before the twentieth century dawns, Midwives will, as a class, have ceased to exist in the United

Kingdom; and, in short, that they will be literally "ended," to the great benefit of everyone concerned.

But this raises the important question as to the class of workers who will take the place of the defunct Midwife; an inquiry which we shall have considerable pleasure in considering at length, inasmuch as we deem it suitable that those who, in a matter of this importance, demolish one argument or scheme, should be prepared forthwith to construct another, and perhaps more suitable one.

It appears to us, then, that the work and place of the ancient Midwife will, in future, be taken by the modern Obstetric Nurse; a woman as well trained for her duties as her predecessor was ignorant; a Nurse as much in accord with the spirit of the age as the Midwife is an anachronism; above all things, a professional worker who will be as completely under the direction of medical practitioners as Midwives, at the present day, are, for the most part, uncontrollable and uncontrolled. And the significant fact should be noted that the very people who hysterically demand that Midwives should be registered, in order that they should be better educated, are those who understand so little of the subject that they propose that the control of the registration, and the control of the registered Midwives, should be confided into the hands of the County Councils. The idea of a Council almost solely composed of laymen solemnly inquiring into a case of alleged malpractice by one of its Midwives, and being called upon to decide, for example, whether she did right in administering a dose of Ergot, or wrong in putting on the forceps, is ludicrous enough to have been evolved by the author of "Alice in Wonderland." The one thing certain is, as all medical men who have carefully considered the subject assert, that the present dangers to the public would be increased a hundred-fold if such an Act were passed; that these legalised, but ignorant, practitioners of Midwifery, would, by their sins of omission, as well as of commission, do infinitely more harm if they were more irresponsible than

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